

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT AND CONCURRENT REZONE

2007-M-01 – PARK AVENUE PUBLIC HEARING FINAL ISSUE PAPER – (REVISED JUNE 29, 2007)

DESCRIPTION: The owner of the property at 326 Park Avenue North has requested a Comprehensive Plan amendment and rezone from the current Residential Medium Density (RMD) designation implemented with Residential 10 (R-10), ten dwelling units per acre, zoning to a Commercial Neighborhood designation implemented with Commercial Neighborhood (CN) zoning. In reviewing this request in the context of the Comprehensive Plan land use, the City expanded this application to include six additional parcels in the 300 block of Park Avenue: 335, 330, 325, and 323 Park Avenue, as well as, two vacant parcels.

ISSUE SUMMARY:

1. What is the appropriate zoning for 326 Park Avenue North?
2. If commercial zoning is appropriate for 326 Park Avenue North, is it also appropriate for the other six residentially zoned properties in the 300 block of Park Avenue North?
3. How should parking be accommodated as residential structures convert to commercial uses on Park Avenue?

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY:

- 326 Park Avenue North should be changed from a Comprehensive Plan designation of Residential Medium Density with R-10 zoning to a Comprehensive Plan designation of Commercial Neighborhood with CN zoning.
- The other six residentially zoned properties in the 300 block of Park Avenue North should also be changed from a Comprehensive Plan designation of Residential Medium Density with R-10 zoning to a Comprehensive Plan designation of Commercial Neighborhood with CN zoning.
- Parking in the CN zone on Park Avenue should be accommodated at the back or sides of the structures.

ANALYSIS: The original subject property at 326 Park Avenue North is a 5,000 square foot parcel with a single story, 880 square foot, two bedroom home built in 1941. The building grade of the house is classified as low/average in King County records. The area is part of the Renton Farm Plat.

The land use in proximity to the subject property is varied. Within the same block there are multiple commercial uses (including a small grocery store and a tavern), homes that have been converted to office use, an apartment building, and single-family dwellings. The Satori School is located to the rear of the property.

The following are existing uses in the 300 block of Park Avenue North: (see attachment 1)

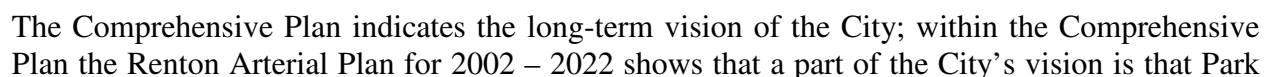
- 1) In the Corridor Commercial designation, the northern portion of the block:
 - a. Dog and Pony Alehouse, a tavern and restaurant built in 1958 (at corner of North 4th and Park)
 - b. Single family residence, built in 1920 converted to office use
 - c. Happy Hounds Dog Grooming, converted residence built in 1935
 - d. NW Four Seasons Landscaping, residence converted to business, built in 1923
 - e. Single family residence, built in 1923
 - f. Single family residence, built in 1937
- 2) In the Commercial Neighborhood designation, the southern portion of the block:
 - a. Single family dwelling built in 1940, owned by same owner as Bennett Apartments, rear of property used as parking for apartments
 - b. Bennett Apartments, built in 1965
 - c. Arnolds Market, built in 1965
- 3) In the Residential Medium designation, at the middle of the block:
 - a. Single family residence built in 1916
 - b. Duplex built in 1938
 - c. Vacant lot
 - d. Single family residence built in 1905
 - e. Vacant lot
 - f. Single family residence, built in 1919
 - g. Single family residence, built in 1941 (subject property)

Mr. Kunovsky, the proponent of this land use action request, has proposed converting the residence into a small professional office. Surface parking to serve the office use would be located at the rear of the building. If the property were rezoned CN, a fifteen-foot (15') setback would be required along the property line of the subject parcel on the side where it abuts the Residential 10 zoned property.

On two sides of Mr. Kunovsky's property, the current land use is more intensive than single-family land use. To the south, the market that is located there has a large parking lot and accommodates many users throughout their business hours. To the east, the Satori School is an alternative high school with approximately 150 students who attend school during regular school hours. The parking lot for the school lies on the portion of the school property that borders the subject property. To the north, is a single-family residence. Across the street to the west, is a vacant lot.

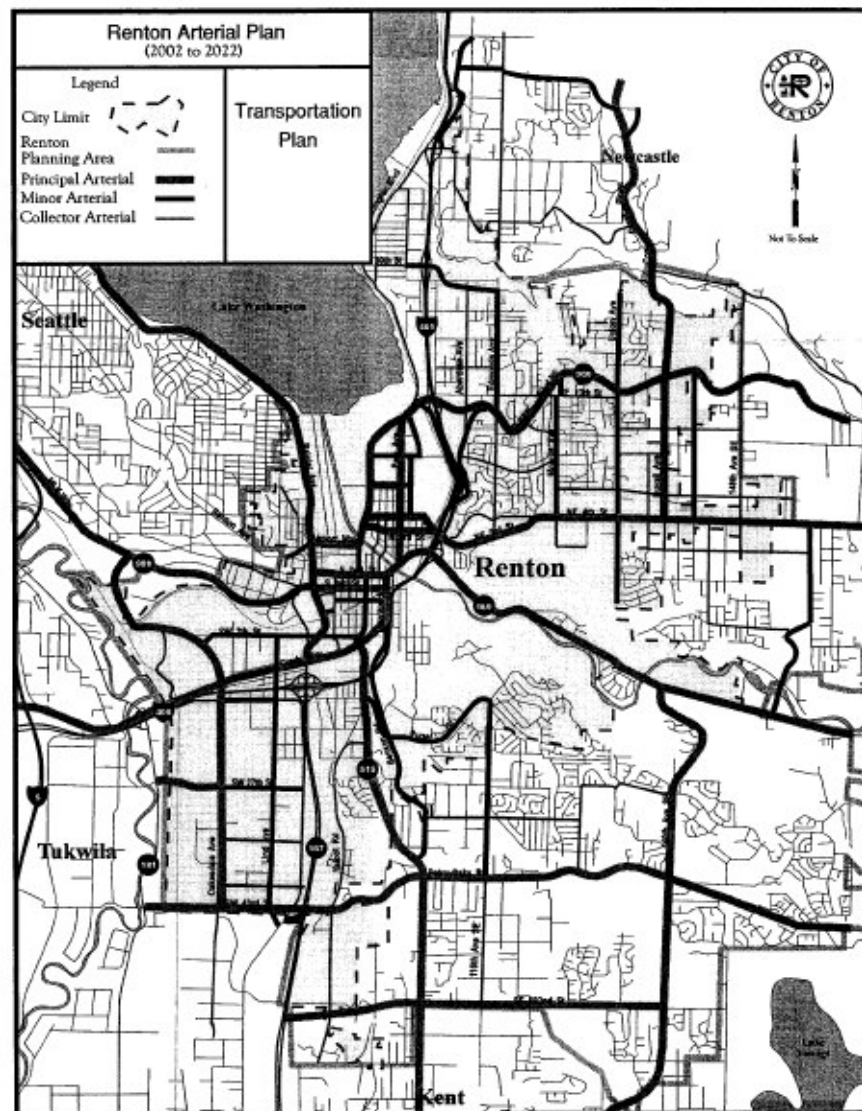
In evaluating the potential conversion of this single-family residence to a commercial use, the context of single-family land use along the Park Avenue corridor was analyzed. Park Avenue North is a street that historically had been part of a traditional residential neighborhood. Over time, much of the land use along this street has evolved into commercial uses, including many homes that have been converted to commercial and/or office uses. The land uses outside the most immediate area to the north and to the south have also experienced change. Renton's downtown core has recently begun to regain its vitality with more dense residential developments and the transit center. The area to the north is evolving from an area that was

- 335 Park Avenue
- 330 Park Avenue
- 325 Park Avenue
- 323 Park Avenue
- two vacant parcels



Avenue North will serve as a principal arterial (map below). The 2002-2022 improvements plan includes arterial widening from North 6th to Logan Avenue North. Park Avenue is also planned to serve as a roadway for local transit routes on the Renton 2002-2022 Transit Plan – Conceptual map. As traffic volumes increase, single-family residential use becomes increasingly less appealing to residents. Single-family homes on a principal arterial are typically not perceived as desirable places to live. Additionally, arterials, particularly principal arterials, are opportunities for commercial land use in areas that are not particularly conducive to single family residential uses.

RENTON ARTERIAL PLAN



The traffic counts along Park Avenue North are as follows:

- 200 block – 9,200
- 300 block – 11,000
- 400 block – 13,300
- 500 block – 21,500
- approaching I-405 between 18,100 and 25,500 vehicles per day.

Examination of these traffic counts in combination with the understanding that the transportation plan for Park Avenue is for it to be a principal arterial, make it apparent that a commercial designation is appropriate. At this time, the traffic counts on Park are not at the levels of other principal arterials in the city with CA zoning, making CN zoning more appropriate. For example, Grady Way, NE 4th, and Rainier Avenue are all principal arterials with CA zoning that have traffic counts of 20,000 – 40,000+ vehicle trips per day. These traffic volumes on Park Avenue also lend to a parallel transition of intensity in land use. On blocks to the north of the 300 block where traffic volumes are higher, the designation is Commercial Corridor (CC) with CA and UC-N1 zoning. The lower volume 200 block is designated Commercial Neighborhood with the CN zone and Residential Medium Density (RMD) with R-10 zoning. The transition from R-10 to Urban Center coincides with the transition from 9,200 to 21,500 vehicles per day. The remaining RMD designation with R-10 zoning in the 300 block is counter to the transition. The CN designation and zone does facilitate the transition. These factors and the existing commercial uses at the northern and southern ends of the 300 block make commercial neighborhood an appropriate designation for this portion of the 300 block of Park Avenue North.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND ZONING: The Residential Medium Density Comprehensive Plan designation is intended to create the opportunity for neighborhoods that offer a variety of lot sizes, housing, and ownership options. Residential Medium Density neighborhoods should include a variety of unit types designed to: incorporate features from both single-family developments, support cost-efficient housing, facilitate infill development, encourage use of transit service, and promote the efficient use of urban services and infrastructure (see attachment 2, RMD purpose statement). The designation is implemented by both the R-10 and R-14 zoning designations (*Policy LU-157*).

The zoning for the properties in the expanded area is R-10. The uses allowed in the Residential 10 zone are primarily various forms of small lot single-family residential development. Existing uses are consistent with *Policy LU-165*. There are no commercial uses that would be viable in an urban neighborhood permitted in the R-10 zone. The R-14 zoning designation does allow more intensive commercial and residential uses (*Policies LU-165 and LU-181*). However, the zone requires an area of at least 20 acres in order to be applied (*Policy LU-159*). The corridor of Park from the Urban Center - North area continuing south to its extent at Bronson does not meet this 20-acre requirement. The area is approximately 11.5 acres total in size. So, R-14 zoning would not be feasible for this location without consideration of a larger area-wide rezone.

The purpose of the Commercial Neighborhood (CN) designation, in part “*is to provide small scale, low-intensity commercial areas located within neighborhoods primarily for the convenience of residents who live nearby*” (page IX-70). The Commercial Neighborhood

designation is implemented with Commercial Neighborhood zoning (*Policy LU-422*). Commercial Neighborhood allows uses that are small in scale and have limited volume of business. Typically, CN businesses are expected to generate low vehicular traffic and require a small amount of on-site parking. Examples of CN uses are eating and drinking establishments (excluding drive-through, fast food service), offices with size restrictions, lower intensity retail, and on-site professional or individual services. Excluded uses include vehicle repair, fitness centers, adult retail sales, dry cleaning, service and social organizations, and off-site services. Residential development is allowed in Commercial Neighborhood, when it is on upper levels at a density of four units per structure with allowed Commercial Neighborhood use on the ground floor.

At this time, Park Avenue is in transition toward the long-range vision of a principal arterial. The more intense commercial use of the CA zone is not appropriate for this portion of Park Avenue at this time. The purpose statement in the comprehensive plan for the Commercial Corridor states that the areas are characterized in part by “*accommodating large volumes of traffic*” (page IX-53). This block of Park does not yet accommodate large volumes of traffic. The policies of the CN designation are more applicable to this portion of Park Avenue than the policies of CC. *Policy LU-425* states that small scale uses in CN areas should “not increase in intensity so that the character of the commercial area or that of the nearby residential area is changed”. This policy is very appropriate for this area of Park. The next street to the east with traffic counts is Garden Street and in the 300 block it has 600 vehicle trips per day and the 300 block of Wells Avenue North to the west also has 600 vehicle trips per day. These parallel streets are clearly single family residential in their nature and CN policies seek to allow commercial use that does not impact those residential areas.

CC *policy LU-337* indicates that CA zoning should apply to areas that are served by transit, have strip commercial development patterns, have large surface parking lots, primary development on the sites is located at the rear portion of the property with parking in the front of the buildings, parcel size and configuration is typically defined by a larger parcel fronting the arterial street with multiple buildings and businesses, and the corridor exhibits long block lengths and/or an incomplete grid street network. This middle portion of Park Avenue meets none of these criteria. The area does meet the criteria that it be served by transit. However, the area does not have strip commercial development, it is comprised of smaller parcels of land, there is no capacity for large surface parking lots, development with parking in the front of the buildings is not desired and does not exist, and the street network is a complete and functioning grid network. Thus, the CC designation is not appropriate for this portion of Park Avenue at this time.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS: The entire area of the seven parcels on Park Avenue North proposed for rezoning to CN is approximately 38,850 square feet, or .89 acre. There are currently four dwelling units. According the buildable lands methodology, under the current zoning, there is capacity for 8.48 total units. There is no capacity for commercial space because commercial is not allowed with the current zoning designation.

Under the proposed zoning, there is capacity for 10,490 square feet of commercial space. According the buildable lands methodology, commercial properties in CN zones utilize 400 square feet of space per employee. Thus, the entire rezone area has the capacity for 26

employees. Renton policy allows residential uses in the CN zone only when it is on upper stories and only at a density of four units per structure. Thus, the residential density capacity of the rezone area is difficult to determine. If all parcels remained as non-consolidated properties, then seven parcels could allow seven separate projects each with four dwelling units for a net 28 dwelling units.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE: The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment of the seven parcels on the 300 block of Park Avenue North from Residential Medium Density to Commercial Neighborhood must meet at least one criteria in RMC 4-9-020G. This criteria requires that it be found that:

- 1) The request supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan, or
- 2) The request supports the adopted business plan goals established by the City Council, or
- 3) The request eliminates conflicts with existing elements or policies, or
- 4) The request amends the Comprehensive Plan to accommodate new policy directives of the City Council.

This expanded CPA proposal meets the first criterion, that the change supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan. The adopted Comprehensive Plan land use element goals seek to “*promote new development and neighborhoods*” that “*are walkable places where people can live, shop, play, and get to work without always having to drive*” (goal 7b). The amendment also supports the intent of the Comprehensive Plan transportation element Arterial Plan. “The improvements comprised by the Arterial Plan have been identified through the land use and transportation planning process as improvements that protect or improve neighborhoods, improve safety, improve business access, and are economically feasible (page XI-22).

ZONING CONCURRENCY: This concurrent rezone from R-10 to CN complies with the decision criteria for rezones in RMC 4-9-180. This criteria requires that it be found that:

- 1) The proposed amendment meets the review criteria in RMC 4-9-020G; and
- 2) The property is potentially classified for the proposed zone being requested pursuant to the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan; and
- 3) At least one of the following circumstances applies:
 - a) The subject reclassification was not specifically considered at the time of the last area land use analysis and area zoning; or
 - b) Since the most recent land use analysis or the area zoning of the subject property, authorized public improvements, permitted private development or other circumstances affecting the subject property have undergone significant and material change.

This request meets all of the required zoning change criteria above. Criteria number one is met because it supports the vision embodied in the Comprehensive Plan as outlined previously. Number two is met because these parcels meet the policies of the proposed Land Use designation of CN as explained in the analysis section. Number three is met through subpart b; this block of Park Avenue North has experienced significant and material change due to authorized public improvements at the Landing and in Downtown. The area has also experienced significant and material change due to permitted private development at the Landing and in Downtown. This

request is compliant with the Comprehensive Plan and the proposed zoning is consistent with the adopted policies for the CN land use designation.

PUBLIC PROCESS FOR EXPANDED AREA: A letter was mailed to all property owners with a property that is adjacent or abutting the expanded study area informing them of the proposed changes, including changing the designation to commercial for the other residentially designated properties, and requesting their input. Five area property owners responded. Of the five respondents three own properties within the expanded study area. Thus, within the expanded study area there are seven properties, four of which are favorable to changing the designation to commercial. One of the non-responsive property owners in the study area is the Renton School District that owns a vacant parcel.

CONCURRENT ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT ADDRESSING PARKING: City staff has observed many circumstances where as single-family residences convert to business uses, parking is accommodated in the front of the house. When front yards are covered with gravel and/or pavement and the space is used as a parking lot it degrades the quality of the neighborhood and the feeling of pedestrian friendliness. The type of conversions to business uses the city would like to see occur are the type that add to the visual quality of the neighborhood and the City. Thus, staff recommends that in the Commercial Neighborhood zone businesses located in single-family dwellings or duplexes, be required to accommodate parking in the side or back yard areas of the property.

Keeping business parking restricted to the side or rear yards when located in single-family buildings meets the policies set in the Comprehensive Plan Commercial Neighborhood land use designation. Specifically, Policy LU-424, “*Commercial Neighborhood designated areas should not increase in scale or size to the point of changing the character of the nearby residential neighborhood*”. Also, Policy LU-430, “*Commercial structures in Commercial Neighborhood designated areas should be compatible with nearby residential areas in height, front yard setbacks, lot coverage, building design, and use*”. These policies seek to enhance the commercial opportunities for area residents while ensuring the sense and scale of the neighborhood is preserved. The placement of parking at the side and/or rear yard helps to preserve neighborhood character and ensures that commercial uses are compatible with residential areas.

To ensure that adequate parking can be provided for these converted business uses without using the front yard area, staff also recommends modifying standards for the location of required parking. First, it is proposed the zoning text be amended so that required parking can be accommodated with off-site parking when sufficient parking cannot be provided on the premises. Second, staff recommends modifying when the use of joint use parking facilities is permitted. This modification would allow the use of joint use facilities for both uses with dissimilar peak hours and when the parking facility is underutilized. Both of these changes would help ensure that adequate parking could be provided for business uses and that the parking would not occur in front of the converted home. These recommended changes to parking standards require a zoning text amendment. Proposed zoning text language is shown in attachment 3a and 3b.